

# March of Olives: How It all Began

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Summary: Before the Civil War, before the Defection, before they were Helljumpers, they were Covenant. This is the story of Kartek Kalimee, Hogarth Hakimee, and a Jackal named Hoke. How they began, how they fought, and how they changed.

## 1. First Light

Covenant Destroyer \_Warrior's Oath\_

En route to Sigma Octanus

9th Age of Reclamation

The Elie on duty watched as the U-shaped dropship gracefully entered the hangar bay of the destroyer \_Warrior's Oath\_. A handful of Grunts and two Elites in blue armor jumped out and walked to the Major's station. One stepped ahead.

"Are you Minor Kalimee?"

"Yes, Excellency," the recruit replied swiftly.

"I have orders to escort you to the control room."

The walk to the control room, the heart and soul of the \_Warrior's Oath\_, lasted a few units and a couple corridors. Before retiring, the Major gestured young Kalimee into the familiar trench-and-platform room. Another Elite, this one in golden armor turned as the recruit walked up the ramp to the command consoles. The Ship Master lifted his right hand in greeting.

"Good evening Minor," he said. "I am Ship Master Ecktumee and welcome to the \_Warrior's Oath\_"

"Yes, Excellency."

I have heard great things of your performance in the Trials," the Ship Master said thoughtfully yet with all the bearing required of a senior Officer.

"Thank you, Excellency."

"I expect the same from you on the field of battle."

"Yes, Excellency."

"Good," Ecktumee paused. "You are assigned to Combat Team Six. You will be in command of six Unggoy, four orange and two red. Major Rostomee will show you your quarters."

"Yes, Excellency."

Bowing with all respect due a superior, Kalimee turned and walked back down the purple ramp where the Elite from the docking bay waited.

"Follow me."

It was a brief walk to a small room in the ship. In it was a small rectangular room with a hard, long bed, a small table, and a computer console to send and receive electronic messages, whether from home or a superior.

"Your squad's common chamber is the next door down," the Major said stoically. "I suggest you get acquainted with the Unggoy as soon as possible. Their loyalty can make or break your stay." With that he left.

The purple halls of the ship were silent and empty. After sticking his head out of his quarters, Kalimee stepped out and turned left to find another of his rank and race having practically run into him.

The other grunted. Kalimee raised a hand.

"We were never introduced on the transport," Kalimee said.

"Hakimee. Hogarth. I'm the next door down."

"Oh."

"So," Hakimee continued. "Have you heard? We will meet the Humans tomorrow."

"Tomorrow?" Kalimee was taken aback.

"Yes, a Fight." Kalimee could only click his mandibles in acknowledgment.

"Good Evening." Hakimee entered his room.

After taking a few 'seconds' to think, Kalimee walked into his common chamber. Several Unggoy sat around a small table, about a unit high, drinking from their food nipples. A few looked up at their new Sangheili, others simply kept drinking.

Kalimee raised his head, and all the Unggoy promptly rose and stood by their nipples, facing their leader.

"Who is your highest?" Kalimee asked. One of the red Unggoy stepped forward.

"Me am, Excellency," he pipped. "Me Wiwik!" Kalimee nodded.

"We are going into battle soon. I want all needlers and plasma weaponry in your Unggoy hands by 7 Cycle. Upon hearing the word "combat," a few of the Unggoy briefly turned heads in fear or apprehension. Kalimee promptly left the room and his Unggoy went back to their nipples.

Hoke the Kig-Yar leaned on his glowing blue shield, letting the cold energy liven up the watch. Below him, the pink gas bags known to the Covenant as "Hunagok" and the contemptible gas-suckers. Hoke frowned. The Prophets should never have utilized the Unggoy; they should have been exterminated. Unfortunately the Prophets decreed the Unggoy cannon fodder which would have to do.

Hoke's commanding Kig-Yar, a gold-shielder named Tak walked up. Hoke turned around to acknowledge him. It was so much nicer being led by fellow Kig-Yar, the Sangheili stand up for the gas suckers.

"Minor Hoke."

"Tak."

"Battle."

"When?"

"Tomorrow."

"Yes Leader, nice day that will be."

"Yes." Tak was a Kig-Yar of few words. Triumph of the Species counts more than any talk of oneself or another. Lousy gas suckers...

"You are all needed in the hangar now. As of standard operating procedure, Ship Master Ecktumee's instructions are pistols for the Minors and needlers for the Majors.

After a brief walk Kalimee and the Unggoy climbed into dropship, attempting to sit. For the Unggoy it was easy-for Kalimee it took a little effort. Kalimee and his Unggoy were situated in the right side of the dropship while Hakimee's squad was in the left. The ship gracefully backed out of the \_Warrior's Oath, \_slowly turned and began its descent to the Human planet. The transport shook as the \_Warrior's Oath \_fired a pair of plasma torpedoes at the Human fleet, which was in orbit, an insult to the Forerunner artifacts on the planet's surface.

The two teams had orders to secure a small "Mareene" encampment four hundred kilometers from the artifacts. Once they were in possession, they were to hold position, fend off any attacks, and wait for a flight of Banshees to arrive and set up shop.

It was expected to be a relatively easy mission. Resistance was

expected to be minimal, nothing the Covenant's warrior couldn't handle.

As the ship shook upon entering the planetary atmosphere, the Unggoy adjusted their life-support gear, weapons were stowed, and Kalimee could only mutter to himself.

"\_Thou in faith will keep us safe..."\_

## 2. Two Encounters

The ride lasted a few more deciunits. The transport bearing the Unggoy and two Sangheili touched down on a hill overlooking a mishmash of tents, trenches, and stationary guns.

The troops piled out and began marching down. Almost immediately one of Kalimee's Unggoy went down from a sniper round to the head. Not a good start for a career.

"Sniper!" the scarlet Major in command roared. Being careful to zigzag in case of more sniper fire, Kalimee ran up to the Major.

"Excellency !"

"Get down!"

The two hit the dirt as a pair of shots screamed past where their heads had previously been. Kalimee's stomach began to sicken.

"This isn't going to work!"

"Calm down," the Major scolded. "Don't dishonor your lineage!"

"The sniper is going to kill us," Kalimee pleaded.

"Nonsense," the Major said as he threw a plasma grenade at the fortified humans. It landed half a unit from one of the stationary guns which was chipping away at Hakimee's shields. "Just follow me," with that he rose and charged. Kalimee clutched his plasma rifle tightly and followed..

A machine gun nest poured lead into the path of the advancing Sangheili. Kalimee took a dozen rounds to the chest. He sidestepped, fired a burst of plasma at the offending human, and continued on his way.

Once on level ground, Kalimee and the Major unleashed a barrage of plasma; Kalimee hit the gunner several times and the figure slumped against the barrel. A few more shots convinced another human to fall back. Now he just needed to find that sniper.

After hosing down another human and watching his superior doing the same, Kalimee turned his head back for a brief glance. His squad was lagging behind and taking some fire.

"Get forward! You can't do any good back there!"

As he turned his head back Kalimee felt a blow to him, like a giant

hammer striking his frontal armor. His shields died and Kalimee paused and crouched..

Ahead of him was a human clad in primitive armor, holding a large silver gun with a wide barrel. Another hit from that would almost certainly kill him.

Kalimee dived towards the infidel, knocking the beast off his feet. Kalimee righted himself, clubbed the human with his weapon, ducked to avoid the majority of the next shot from the tube gun, and shot the human twice in the head. It went down with a loud thud. In his next act Kalimee crushed the blasphemous weapon with his armored foot. Kalimee heard more shots and shield depletion so he turned a quarter turn to his left, more humans.

Kalimee sprayed blue plasma toward the enemy and ran up to a nearby tent. The sound of battle could still be heard but he didn't care to look. A sat against the fabric, facing the dead human. After catching his breath, the blue-clad soldier leaned to the right, saw a few more humans and his overextended superior. His squad was nowhere in sight. He calmed himself and fired more shots at the humans, killing one and sending another packing. Two more shots between the shoulder blades persuaded the infidel to die. He walked diagonally to another tent, knowing his instructors would frown on such precaution. After raising his head above the protective cover he saw-that it was over.

Human bodies and flaming tents littered the valley. The Major hailed Kalimee who ran up to him.

"Nice creeping, Minor."

"Excellency," Kalimee replied hesitantly. "I was only concerned about the success of the mission, a premature charge would have allowed the humans too..." His superior raised a hand to silence him.

"Your performance was adequate, the Covenant is pleased to have you. Now then, tell me. How was the sniper?"

A terrible realization flashed through Kalimee's mind. He was supposed to...

"Down!" he yelled.

Kalimee was able to dodge the bullet, but the Major straightened up and was hit square in the chest by the round. He went down.

Kalimee followed the trail left by the bullet to a lone human in a prone position atop a small mud hut. Kalimee had no time to react. The sniper positioned his finger by his trigger, when Kalimee saw a small purple explosion engulf the Mareene. Wiwik wattered up to the body.

Kalimee jogged up to and counted his Unggoy, six in all, so he had lost one more. Not bad, his senior Unggoy had obviously rallied the troops. Kalimee made a mental note to recommend him for SpecOps duty, that or scold the little trooper for cowardice.

"Me kill Sniper!" Wiwik said proudly.

"Yes," Kalimee muttered. He didn't get to hear what else Wiwik had to

say because a pair of Banshee attack craft decided to buzz the field. Kalimee looked up to see them bank and descend for a landing. Hakimee rushed to assist in rearming the Banshees with fuel rods dropped by the dropship.

While all of this was happening the commanding Major came jogging up to Kalimee and his squad.

"Over so soon? Nice squad work, most recruits don't bother to know their fodder."

"Hm."

"Field Master Tumamee wants us to hold here, says the main human stronghold has..."

"Very bad thing!" Kalimee's Unggoy started running but with a sharp yell he reorganized them. A human dropship was coming in from the north-and fast. The Banshees rose to intercept and one managed to land a fuel rod on the edge of the portside wing but the ship's 70mm cannon swept across the nimble attack craft, sending them away trailing smoke.

"Well there goes our air support," Kalimee growled.

About a hundred meters units out the craft did a complete turn, lowered itself, and a dozen humans in full battle armor piled out.

Wiwik managed to get himself and the other Unggoy to the other side of the hut. Plasma shots and explosive needles barraged the humans. Between that fire, and since Hakimee had now joined up with them, three blazing plasma rifles, the humans fell quickly. One Unggoy was killed and Kalimee took a burst of 7.62mm bullets in the crack between his breastplate and shoulder armor, but it was a successful engagement and within five minutes the last human had died, with half his flesh burned away.

The troops fanned out, watching for enemy craft, or even worse, snipers. After a few minutes darkness fell and they gave up. Another dropship deposited a pair of plasma cannons and several cylindric methane huts for the Unggoy. The Sangheili used the few surviving human tents.

After positioning the stationary guns on the north and south sides of the encampment, Kalimee turned in as Hakimee took the first watch.

Hogarth Hakimee gazed up into the night sky. Other than the occasional explosion courtesy of the fierce battle being fought in space. The ground wasn't much more interesting. The non-sentient beings crawling and flying around the landscape.

\_Not the glorious fight I had expected. I could have been a pilot or maybe even on the bridge of a destroyer or maybe even a cruiser, blasting my way through multitudes of infidels. Thank the forerunners I'm not some legless cripple rotting away on High Charity or a...\_

"Your watch is up, Minor Hakimee."

Hakimee turned around, standing just behind and to the left of him was the other younger he had met on the \_Warrior's Oath.\_

"Yes." He walked away as Kalimee assumed the post north of the sleeping troops.

At 3Unit orders came to abandon the position and head back to the ship. A dropship picked up the unit and rose to the sky. After a few deciseconds they had broken free of the atmosphere towards the \_Warrior's Oath, \_dodging numerous missiles and pulse lasers from the space battle which was dying down. A pair of human Longsword fighters approached the slow transport but a blast from one of the \_Warrior's Oath's \_point defense lasers destroyed one and convinced the other to retreat.

The transport made a sharp left turn to enter the hangar bay, seconds before a pair of heavy rounds from the human ship \_Barbados \_struck the Covenant destroyer a few units forward of the hangar, the shields collapsed as the ship replied with a pair of plasma torpedoes, slicing through the offending vessel, if such an inferior machine could even be called such.

The two squads jumped out of the dropship and were herded to a nearby room for debriefing and then to their quarters. Soon after the destroyer accelerated into slipspace, leaving the human fleet behind as it screamed across the galaxy.

"\_Your objective today is to retrieve the computer crystal located four kilometers north of here," the Instructor said gravely. "You will be evaluated on the speed of your capture. Today we will be using stun energy. It won't kill you but it will hurt. If your shields go out, you are dead and are to report back here to me. Thank the Prophets you are not using live rounds. The last recruit to return here, and any who fall, will not have rations for the next two days." \_

\_The Instructor walked down the line of Elites in their yellow training armor handing out plasma rifles. Kalimee focused his gaze on the group of Elite troopers in their path, but a hard punch to the neck and deforming energy shield returned his attention. \_

"\_Are you listening Recruit!" The Instructor yelled. "Are saying you are too good for a simple exercise? Do you want to spend your days watching monitors in a ship's engine room?"\_

"\_No, Excellency," Kalimee said weakly.\_

"\_Then get going with the rest of us!" Kalimee realized that all the other trainees were already running off toward their objective. Kalimee grabbed his rifle and hurried off.\_

\_After several minutes Kalimee could see a firefight between the recruits and the military unit on adversary duty. Two recruits had already fallen. \_

\_Kalimee ducked behind a rock to avoid a plasma shot and inserted his rifle into a gap in the rocky terrain, firing wildly at the enemy. A few shields flared and an instructor turned black to indicate they had been 'killed.' Kalimee fired a few more shots then watched his

brethren mop up. He ran after them, desperately trying to catch up. He didn't want his rations cut. He didn't want a black note by the name of Kartek Kalim.\_

\_A few more shots and bitter firefights later Kalimee watched another trainee, a frisky youngling named Barum run past. Kalimee then realized that his armor wasn't black. He had the crystal!\_

\_After confronting another trainer and firing several shots into the target's midsection, Kalimee ran back to the starting line, taking a hit or two from pursuing troopers. After a minute or so Kalimee began to grow tired, the rocky terrain was hell to his feet. He could feel his lungs emit wheezes every few seconds. Finally Kalimee crossed the finish line and promptly collapsed.\_

### 3. Preparations

A/N: The fics going a little faster than I'd like it too, but the Battle of Reach will be big, so I should be ok.

\* \* \*

>Kalimee was quiet for the next few days, largely keeping himself except for the occasional get-together. He thought about his training mostly and why he was even here in the first place.<p><p>

Kalimee grimaced, or tried to rather, as he remembered the beating he'd had after finishing last in the training exercise. His performance hadn't improved much after that. He definitely would never make SpecOps or become a Field Master like his father or even a Commander like his brother. He would likely never pass Major. To go far you needed courage and honor, neither of which Kalimee possessed.

\_The blows came swiftly and silently, it was amazing how the instructor could inflict so much pain so silently, most likely a former Special Operations officer, they sometimes made their way into the Instructor corps. It wasn't that Kalimee couldn't feel the pain inflicted by the heavy blows, uncushioned by training armor. It was really that he felt it didn't matter whether or not he succeeded. He wasn't likely to do well in the infantry. Shipboard operations, that's what he'd likely do, slave away running an engineering room or a plasma turret, if he was lucky becoming a Ship Master in a decade or two. He shuddered at the thought.\_

Kalimee was quiet for the next couple days, largely keeping to himself, going on the occasional simulator mission with his Unggoy. Wiwik had more than proved himself on those, Kalimee still wondered whether to subject him to the hazards, and extra food nipples, of SpecOps work. All it took was a recommendation from a superior, either Kalimee or the senior squad master. Even Ship Master Ecktumee could give it, although it was rare for a fleet officer to do so.

"Some Kig-Yar bet an Unggoy he couldn't finish his food nipple in ten plasma shots, would you like to watch?"

"No thank you, Hakimee."



"You will miss it," the other Sangheili said as he walked away.

With deliberate slowness the human rounded the corner, its assault rifle raised to its shoulder. It calmly swept the stone walls of the forerunner structure.

Hoke and another of his species approached, careful to keep their avian fingers off the activation buttons to their shields for the moment. Hoke prematurely charged his plasma pistol. The human turned and fired a short burst into him, he stumbled, activated his shield, and released a charge of plasma.

Cutting through the air, the superhot ball and a few smaller shots of the other Kig-Yar struck the human in the face, melting its features as it let off a few more rounds, bouncing harmlessly off Hoke's shield, before falling.

Unknown to the Kig-Yar, a second human had approached from behind and unleashed a hail of bullets into the unprotected rears of the aliens.

Hoke furiously ripped the sensors and pain emulators off his small frame and left. Brushing aside a few Unggoy he made his way to his squadroom. He was in no mood to chat about his day in the simulator and luckily his squad respected that.

Hoke had served in the Covenant for nearly two years now. He had never been called a great Kig-Yar, he had been rejected for sniper school three times, much to his dismay.

\_I only want to kill some humans. \_The Particle Beam rifle was \_the \_way to do that. He didn't want to spend his days hauling around a puny little plasma pistol like an Unggoy. That was for well...Unggoy.

\_Hoke looked back at the family village. The small huts dotted the green landscape as a Covenant Phantom flew overhead, ferrying Kig-Yar to their assignments throughout the fleet. Fulfilling their Great Journey and punishing those who would destroy all the forerunner had created. Someday Hoke would be on one of those Phantoms. Someday he would proudly raise his shield and battle the enemy, battle for his race, his Great Journey.\_

\_Hoke advanced and formed into the battle line, crouching behind his shield as he and his brethren formed an impenetrable barrier from which the Covenant would rise to glory.\_

\_The instructor, an older Kig-Yar with a bent frame from years of war, walked in front of the line, pointing out any flaws in the luminous line of protection. Hoke knew within his gut there would be no mistakes with him.\_

\_The Elder reached Hoke's station, turned a quarter turn, until he faced Hoke. The young Kig-Yar concentrated on the area in front of him, certain he was going to pass, that he was going to make it, maybe even gain a coveted spot in a sniper unit.\_

"\_Initiate Hoke," the instructor snapped his beak. "Lower your shield..."\_

\_Hoke pushed a button on his shield to deactivate the blue aura.\_

"\_Three degrees."\_

Hoke woke in the night. He scanned the room with his powerful observant eyes, he saw nothing out of the ordinary. If there had been, the eyes of a Kig-Yar, the scouts and observers of the Covenant, would have seen them clearly as if it had been day on the fields of a planet.

Still, something wasn't quite right. Hoke could see clearly, but it was as if 'clearly' wasn't so clear anymore. It was as if everything was distorted.

A Sangheili in silver-white armor emerged from the distortion. Hoke rose to greet it, grabbing his plasma pistol just to be safe.

"Greetings Minor Kig-Yar," the Sangheili said.

"Greetings, Excellency," Hoke replied to the SpecOps commander.

"I need volunteers for a special mission," the Sangheili said flatly.

Hoke was silent.

"You want gold shield?" Hoke needed no further persuasion.

Hakimee walked into the control room of the \_Warrior's Oath \_blind, not literally, not to the outside world, but as in not knowing what he was wanted for.

Ship Master Ecktumee and a few Major and SpecOps Sangheili were standing on the command platform. Hakimee walked up as Ecktumee rose a hand in greeting.

"Minor."

"Yes, Excellency."

"I hear you had good marks on zero-gravity operations in training, is that so?"

"Yes, Excellency."

"I will tell you what I have in mind," the Ship Master said softly.

All was explained to Hakimee. A new operation was in the works. The human homeworld had been found and the Prophets wanted it destroyed as soon as possible "to fulfill the hopes and values of all the Covenant, and to wipe the filth away from that which is sacred." The planet was heavily defended, with twenty large cannon ready to destroy any Covenant warships attacking. A unit of "Ranger" Sangheili would be on call for any sabotage or other zero gee operations but were short one. That was where Hakimee would come in.

"I will do it, Excellency," Hakimee gave what he knew would be the

only acceptable answer.

"Good, Sub-Commander Raremamee will show you to a suitable environment armor."

"We have located the human homeworld!" The shuttle bay filled with the shouts and cries of the assembled Unggoy, Sangheili, and Kig-Yar. The few Hunagok on duty, oblivious as always, continued on their work, chirping in disgust if they found personnel sitting on wires.

"All squad leaders are to report to the control room at 9 Unit tomorrow for further briefing," Ecktumee continued. "That is all, return to your stations." The troops slowly filed out.

"The human orbital guns are powered by multiple generators on the ground. They must be neutralized at all costs. The Infidels are expected to have air support so you will be going in via orbital insertion pods. Kalimee stood up.

"Yes, Minor?" Ecktumee asked.

"I thought only Special Operations Forces use insertion pods, Excellency."

"Then that'll be your lucky day," the Ship Master said dryly, "The Fleet's SpecOps units will assault the human command center in prototype dropships."

The briefing continued.

"Once our warriors of the fleet will create a holy door with which our ship will make a slipspace jump to a low orbit. You will be dropped as soon as we have coordinates for the generators. The Fleet Master of \_Particular Justice \_has allowed the use of fuel rod guns in this assault which will be issued one to a squad.

\_Fuel Rod Guns. Resistance must be heavy. \_Kalimee looked around the room at the thirty or so Minor Sangheili and ten Majors. \_How many of us will live? \_Kalimee shook the thoughts out of his head. That was cowardice...or heresy.

"will be available in limited quantities. You are dismissed."

"Minor Kalimee!"

Kalimee turned to see Minor Hakimee dash up to him.

"Yes?"

"I wanted to wish you good faith for the assault."

"It is not for two Sangheili suns."

"I will be leaving the ship tonight."

Kalimee's jaw expanded.

"I will be on special duty. I will join you later if I can." Kalimee nodded.

"May the Forerunner bless you, Minor Kalimee."

Hoke gazed in awe at the prototype dropships. Unlike the normal U-shaped vessels, these were more of a bloated wedge, with a miniture gravity lift and three plasma cannons to bombard the enemy and clear the landing zone. Commander Irkomee had said the new craft were twenty percent faster than ordinary dropships. Hoke clicked his beak in admiration.

Just a few more Units and he would be able to prove the power and superiority of the Kig-Yar and the Covenant. A hangar intercom crackled.

"\_All units report to dropships. The fleet will arrive at the home of the infidels shortly.\_"

Hoke walked up to the ship, stood under its blue circular apparatus, and was raised into the heavens and into Glory.

Meanwhile, the seven Zero Gee Sangheili readied their enviromental protectiong gear, checked their weapons, and began to make their way to the assault boat which would carry them to their objective, whatever and wherever it may be. They were prepared for anything.

They climbed in and the assault boat readied itself for the call to battle.

The soldiers stood with a slight hunch, three to a side as the senior Sangheili paced up and down.

"When we joined the Covenant, we made a vow.

"Thou in faith will keep us safe, whilst we find the path."

"Any and all who oppose us, would block the path to out salvation, must be silenced at any cost.

"We will grind them into dust."

"And decide the fate of our faith!"

A few anxious units passed as the massive \_Fleet of Particular Justice, \_three hundred warships and all, arrived in a high orbit of the planet Reach. Twenty massive MACs and dozens of UNSC ships awaited them.

The first plasma torpedos, pulse lasers, and shipboard MAC rounds were fired as the assault boat bearing Combat Team Nine exited the hangar of the assault carrier \_Cleansing Flame, \_using a Covenant frigate as cover from human guns, it made its way towards a human station comprising a large metal ring.

After conferring with the pilot, the Leader turned back to his Sangheili.

"We have received orders to capture a nearby human space station. It is believed to hold locations of other human installations and perhaps even data on force deployments. Two other teams will be

coming in with us using modified insertion pods.

The assault boat slowed to a relative crawl, and the big door in front opened as the Sangheili inside braced themselves. The human outpost was dead ahead.

The Leader gave the signal, and the Sangheili let go of the ship, fired their thruster packs, and piloted themselves into the cold vacuum of space.

End  
file.